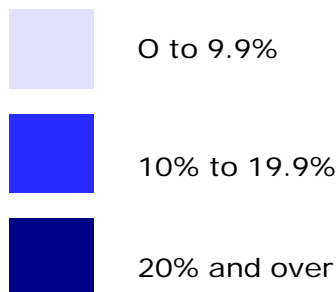
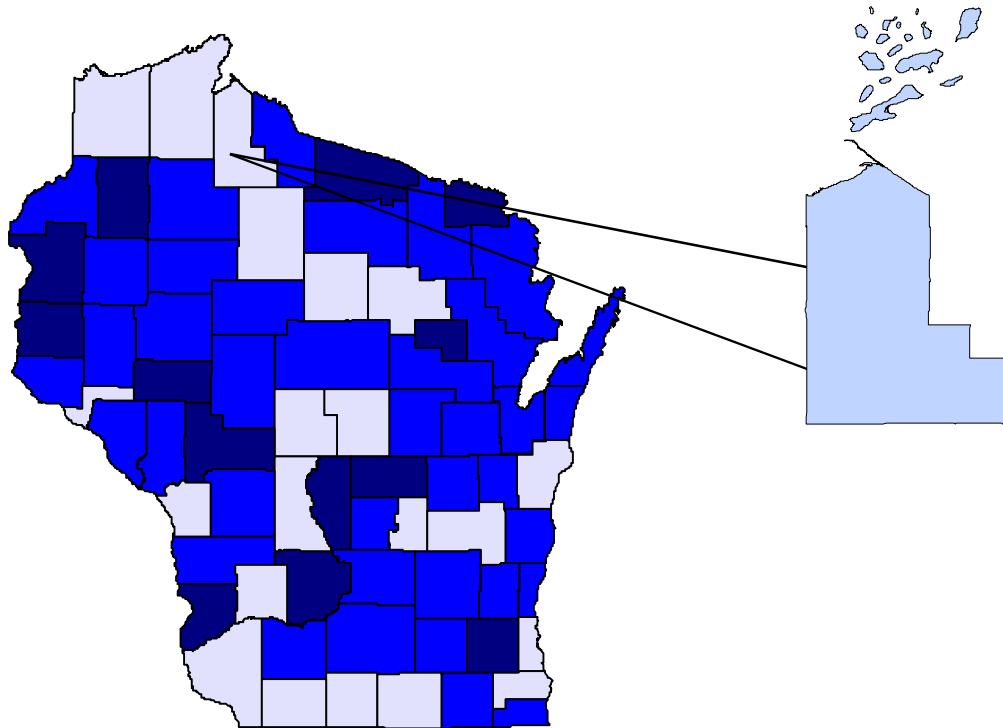


# Ashland County Workforce Profile

Job Growth 1994 to 1999



Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Division of Workforce Solutions  
Bureau of Workforce Information  
October 2001



Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Introduction

The County Workforce Profile has been developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Bureau of Workforce Information (BWI) to provide a broad overview of Ashland County's labor market. The data included in this fourth year of publication is for 1999 to maintain consistency with the previous publications and to provide the user with a single year of reference in order to draw comparisons and form a picture of related labor force and employment information.

A variety of economic and demographic labor market information have been provided to describe the current labor market conditions in the counties and regions of Wisconsin. That information includes 1999 data on population, labor force, industries, employment, wages and income. The narrative describes how local conditions have changed over one-year and five-year intervals. Although population information is available from the 2000 census, it is not included in this publication since the period of time selected for all data sets is 1999. For more recent releases of information please consult the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Labor Market Information website: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi>.

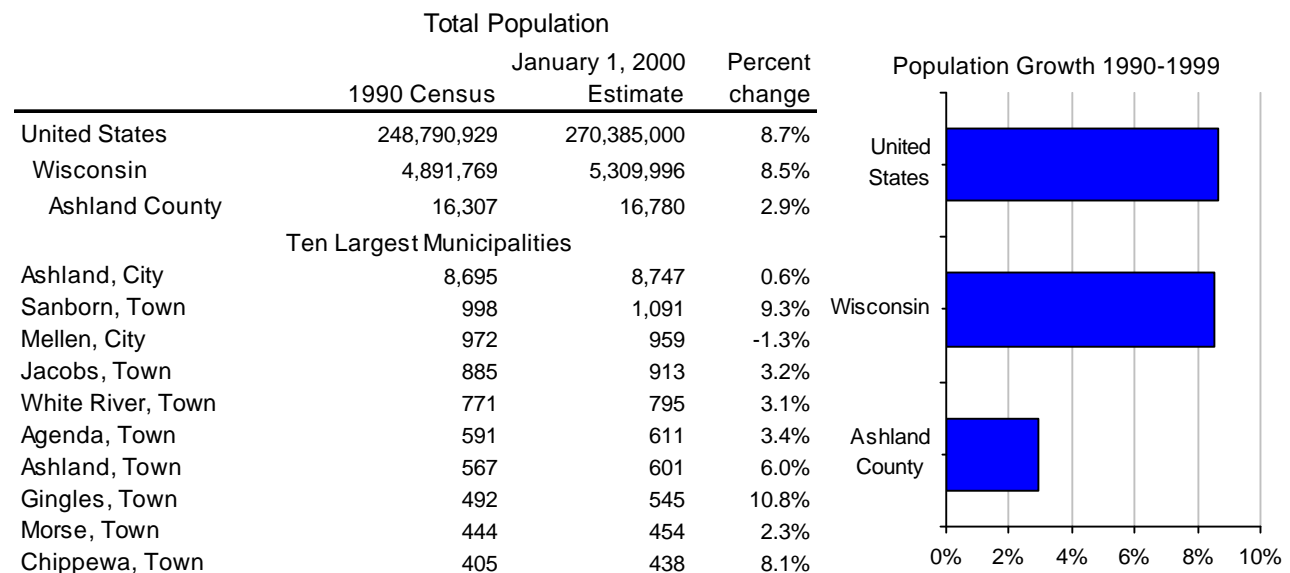
For more detailed information or clarification, please contact your local labor market analyst, Beverly Gehrke, by telephone (715-634-5289) or email ([gehrkb@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:gehrkb@dwd.state.wi.us)).

DWD is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or material in an alternate format, please contact the analyst listed above.

## Ashland County Population and Civilian Labor Force

The total population in Ashland County grew 2.9 percent between 1990 and January 2000, less than both state and national expansion. The greatest numeric increase occurred in the largest municipality: the City of Ashland. Nearly one-third (31%) of all growth in the county occurred in the City of Ashland and the Town of Sanborn, adjacent to the city and encompassed by the Bad River Indian Reservation. The majority of the increase in population (78%) was from people migrating to the county. Even with 371 people moving to Ashland County, however, the net migration rate of 2.3 percent was lower than the rate in statewide of 3.7 percent.

Of the 16,780 residents living in the county at the end of 1999, 12,830 (77%) were 16 years and older. Since 1990, this population segment increased by 540, while the segment aged 15 years and under decreased by 69, resulting in a net county population increase of 473.

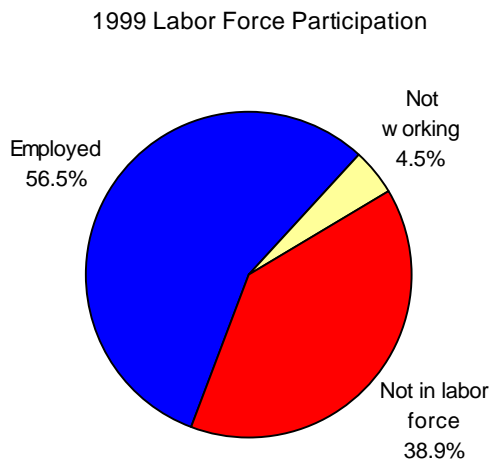


\* Ashland County portion only

Source: WI Dept. of Admin., Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Estimates*, January 1, 2000

The segment of the population 16 years and older is important because the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics uses the age of 16 as the demarcation point for entrants into the potential labor force. The labor force, by definition, includes those who are either working or looking for work, but does not include individuals who have made a choice to not work: retirees, homemakers, and students; nor does it include institutional residents, military personnel, or discouraged job seekers.

Labor force participation increases and contracts with changes in labor market conditions. For example, each spring the Ashland County labor force expands as seasonal workers enter the labor market either to begin a job or to start looking for work.



Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Administration population estimates, Jan 2000, US Census Bureau, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The number of residents aged 16 years and over who are in the labor market determines the labor force participation rate. In 1999, the non-institutional population 16 years and over was 12,545. Of those, 7,700 were actively participating in the labor force and the labor force participation rate was 61.1 percent. This is lower than in 1990 and is well below both the state and national participation rates of 72.3 and 67.1 percent, respectively.

As younger residents age, interest in working and holding a job increases. Teenagers are less likely to participate in the labor force because they are in school. Residents between the ages of 25-54 share the most incentives to work and have the highest participation rates. At 55, however, workers begin to withdraw from the labor market and, by 65, most workers have retired.

This, plus an influx of people migrating to the county, caused the expansion of over 800 more residents between the ages of 40-54 years old. The 25-39 year old group is still the largest in the labor force age population (16 years and older), and with some of the highest participation rates, is a good supply of labor. The influx of individuals from migration could also be a valuable source of both labor and experience.

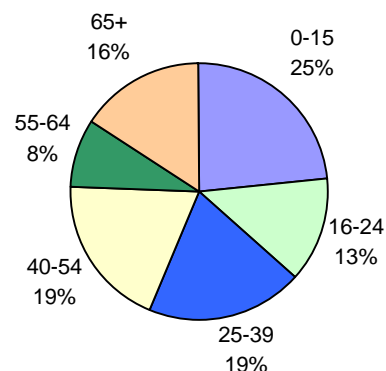
The most significant change from 1990 to 1999 in population groups occurred as the 25-39 year old group matured.

The county participation rate remains low, however, because of the large share of residents over the age of 55. Roughly 32 percent of the labor force age population was over 55 years old in 1999, much higher than the share statewide of 28 percent. Although the county labor force is projected to grow, the additions each year will become smaller and the composition will change to include more of the older population.

#### Ashland County Labor Force Age Population Distribution

Age Group	Population 1990 Census	Population 1999 Estimate	Percent change
0-15	4,019	3,950	-1.7%
16-24	2,061	2,224	7.9%
25-39	3,569	3,264	-8.6%
40-54	2,401	3,253	35.5%
55-64	1,350	1,426	5.6%
65+	2,908	2,664	-8.4%

Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Admin, Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Projections 1990-2020* and US Census Bureau



#### Ashland County Civilian Labor Force Data

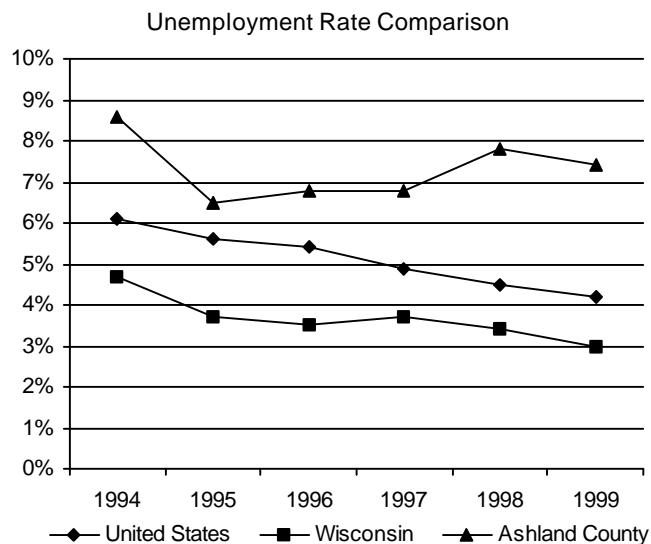
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor Force	8,200	7,900	8,200	8,300	8,000	7,700
Employed	7,500	7,400	7,700	7,700	7,400	7,100
Unemployed	710	520	560	570	630	570
Unemployment Rate	8.6%	6.5%	6.8%	6.8%	7.8%	7.4%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate differs from the percent of the labor force age population not working. The unemployment rate is a percent of labor force participants (61.1% of the labor force age population in Ashland County) who are unemployed and actively looking for work. The number of unemployed in the county includes not only those who are receiving unemployment benefits, but also any resident who actively looked for a job and did not find it.

Out of a total labor force in Ashland County in 1999 of 7,700, 7.4 percent were unemployed. This is higher than both the state and national unemployment rates of 3.0 and 4.2 percent, respectively. The 1999 unemployment rate reflects the reductions from manufacturing employers in both Ashland and Price counties.

Because of this, fewer residents were employed in 1999 than in the previous five years. The number of employed in Ashland County includes not only residents who work for employers located both in and beyond the county boundaries, but also all self-employed residents and proprietors. Roughly 15 percent of the number of employed in Ashland County



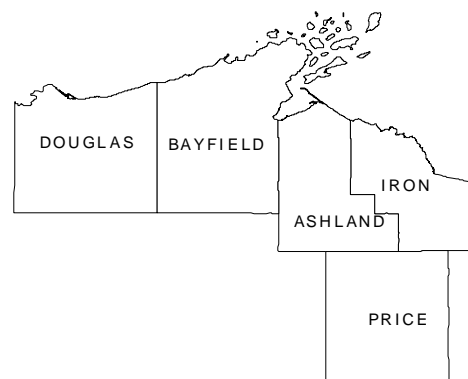
Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

are either farm or nonfarm proprietors. Since 1994, the number of total employed in the county declined by nearly 400 workers in spite of an increase of 150 proprietors.

## Ashland County Commuting Patterns

	Commute To	Commute From	Net Commute
Bayfield County	191	1,739	1,548
Iron County	10	107	97
Price County	407	69	-338
Douglas County	55	46	-9
Elsewhere	174	177	3
Total	837	2,138	1,301
Commute within County	5,747		

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. *Wisconsin's Commuting Patterns*, 1994.

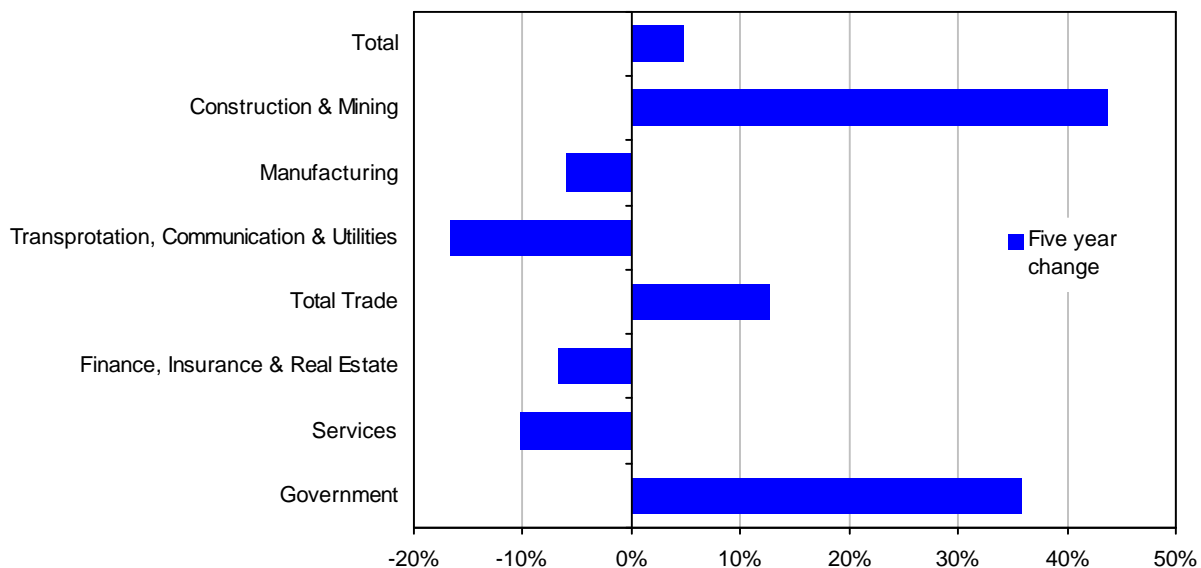


Note: Information on commuting patterns of workers is available only from decennial census data. Since 1990 the number of workers has increased and so has travel on area highways. Until the 2000 census is released, however, the only data we have remains from 1990.

The county labor force includes all employed and unemployed residents who live in the county, even though they may travel out of the county to work. In Ashland County that included roughly 840 residents who commuted to surrounding communities for a job. The favorite destination of workers who traveled out of the county was the City of Park Falls in Price County.

Ashland County is an importer of workers, however. Over 2,100 workers travel into the area to find work with some of the county's largest employers. The heaviest traveled highway is the one that links the City of Ashland to the cities of Bayfield and Washburn in Bayfield County. Of the 1,739 commuters from Bayfield County, 85 percent travel to the City of Ashland to work in health care, manufacturing and retail trade. The city also attracts most of the Ashland County workforce. Nearly 60 percent of county residents work in the City of Ashland. Another eight percent work in the City of Mellen.

## Ashland County Employment Change by Industry 1994 to 1999



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent change	
Total	8,097	8,095	8,307	8,609	8,448	8,491	1 year	5 year
<b>Goods Producing</b>	1,991	2,118	2,125	2,143	1,990	2,006	0.8%	0.8%
Construction & Mining	272	296	314	329	346	391	12.8%	43.8%
Manufacturing	1,719	1,822	1,810	1,814	1,643	1,615	-1.7%	-6.0%
Durable	1,313	1,416	1,384	1,353	1,371	1,436	4.8%	9.4%
Nondurable	406	406	426	462	272	179	-34.3%	-55.9%
<b>Service Producing</b>	6,106	5,977	6,182	6,466	6,458	6,485	0.4%	6.2%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	314	297	310	295	272	262	-4.0%	-16.7%
Total Trade	1,564	1,607	1,682	1,741	1,732	1,763	1.8%	12.7%
Wholesale	170	180	188	192	158	157	-0.1%	-7.6%
Retail	1,394	1,427	1,493	1,549	1,575	1,605	2.0%	15.2%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	245	237	236	245	242	228	-5.8%	-6.8%
Services & Misc.	2,553	2,148	2,187	2,386	2,309	2,291	-0.8%	-10.3%
Total Government	1,430	1,687	1,768	1,799	1,902	1,941	2.1%	35.8%

Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Nonfarm Wage & Salary estimates.

Note: Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding family farming, military, and proprietors. This data, often referred to as 'place of work' data, indicates the number of jobs at the work site without consideration of where the jobholder lives.

Total nonfarm wage and salary employment increased only 4.9 percent from 1994 to 1999 as Ashland County employers added just under 400 jobs to the local economy. Employment growth in the county lagged the state in both the one- and five-year intervals. In the last year, every industry division except construction, retail trade, and government lost jobs. Overall, manufacturing employment declined in the last year, but growth in the durable goods sector was positive and exceeded state growth. While in the nondurable goods sector, employment declined as the full effect of the James River plant closing was incorporated into the estimates.

Over the five-year span, the majority of the new jobs (380) were in the service-producing sector, and from the graph and table above, it would appear that most of that increase occurred in government. But in 1995, roughly 300 jobs with Indian-owned operations were reassigned from the services industry division to government. Because of this transfer, there is no employment growth in the services industry division over the five-year time frame, even though the number of jobs did increase in the services industry immediately following the transfer.

# Ashland County's Largest Industries and Employers

## Top 10 Industry Groups

Industry Group	March 2000		Numerical Change	
	Employers	Employment	1 Year	5 Years
Health Services	35	1,021	-10	-60
Educational Services	8	898	42	63
Lumber And Wood Products	32	871	1	-63
Eating And Drinking Places	44	621	83	152
Industrial Machinery And Equipment	*	*	*	*
Membership Organizations	*	*	*	*
Executive, Legislative, And General	18	271	16	4
Social Services	18	269	13	26
General Merchandise Stores	5	254	*	*
Automotive Dealers & Service Stations	20	194	5	31

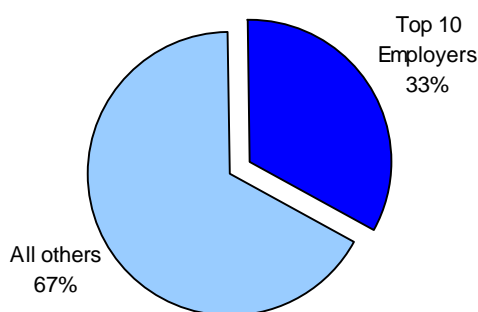
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## Top 10 Employers

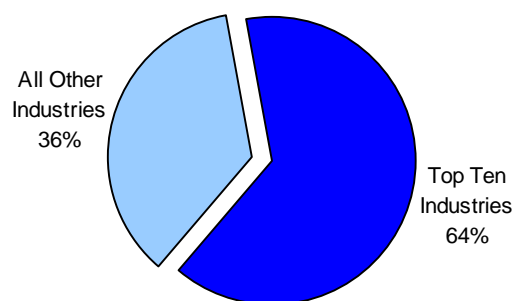
Company	Product or Service	Size
C G Bretting Mfg Co Inc	Industrial equipment: paper machines	250-499
Bad River Band L Superior Chippewa	Membership services: gaming & administration	250-499
Memorial Medical Center Inc	Health care services: hospital	250-499
School District of Ashland	Education	250-499
Columbia Forest Products	Lumber & wood products: veneer	250-499
Walmart Stores	General merchandise store	100-249
Northland College	Education	100-249
County of Ashland	Executive & general government	100-249
Larson-Juhl US LLC	Lumber & wood products: picture frames	100-249
City of Ashland	Executive & general government	100-249

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information Bureau, ES-202 file tape, 1st quarter 1999 and LMI benchmark 2000.

Top 10 Employers Share of Nonfarm Employment



Top 10 Industry Groups Share of Nonfarm Employment

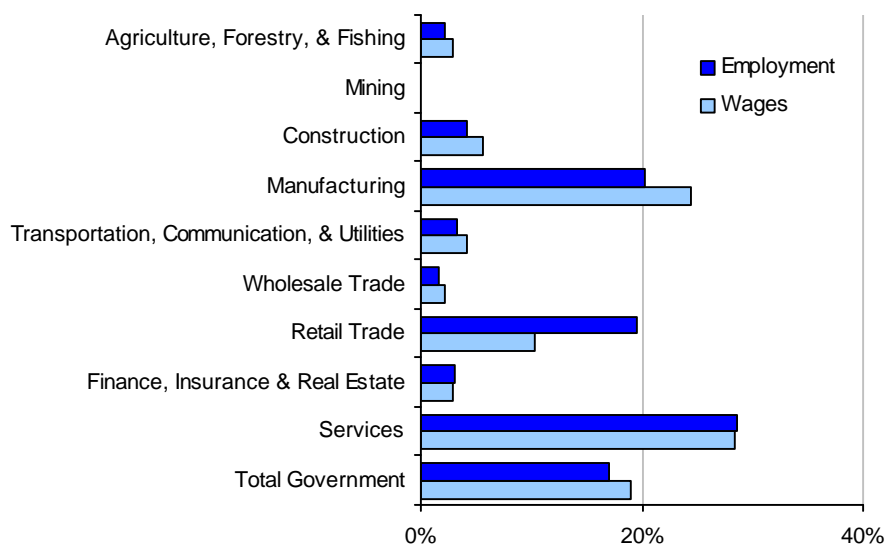


Out of 613 employers in Ashland County, ten provide 33 percent of all the jobs. Nearly two in every three jobs in the county is with an industry on the top industry list. The largest industry group, health services, includes hospitals, clinics, nursing facilities, medical laboratories, and home health care services. Many of the employers in health services are small, but Memorial Medical Center, is on the list of largest employers. The second largest industry group, education services, includes both public and private institutions and employment is most often included with the larger government sector since most schools are funded by local taxes. Employment with private education facilities, like Northland College, is included in the services industry division. Another industry group on the list that is part of the services division is social services but it does not include large employers. The manufacturing industry is represented by two industry groups: lumber and wood products and industrial equipment. Both groups are represented by employers on the largest list. The industries from the retail trade division, eating and drinking places, general merchandise stores, and auto dealers and service stations, are represented by only one employer on the list. Most retail trade employers are small, although together they provide many jobs for local residents.

## Ashland County Employment and Wages 1999

	Annual Average Wage	State Average Wage	Percent of State Average	Percent change 1 year	Percent change 5 year	Number of Workers
All Industries	\$23,267	\$29,609	78.6%	0.9%	17.0%	8,351
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	\$32,235	\$21,499	149.9%	102.4%	216.1%	180
Mining	*	\$39,968	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$31,500	\$36,772	85.7%	-21.2%	12.7%	351
Manufacturing	\$27,952	\$37,773	74.0%	3.4%	13.4%	1,698
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	\$28,608	\$34,523	82.9%	-3.9%	15.0%	277
Wholesale Trade	\$29,815	\$38,048	78.4%	-3.3%	16.5%	143
Retail Trade	\$12,351	\$15,066	82.0%	2.7%	23.4%	1,632
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	\$21,487	\$37,911	56.7%	-2.5%	6.1%	256
Services	\$23,012	\$26,041	88.4%	1.0%	22.9%	2,394
Total Government	\$26,073	\$32,017	81.4%	4.3%	14.1%	1,421

Total Employment and Wage Distribution by Industry Division



Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, *Employment, Wages and Taxes Due covered by Wisconsin's U.C. Law, Tables 209-211.*

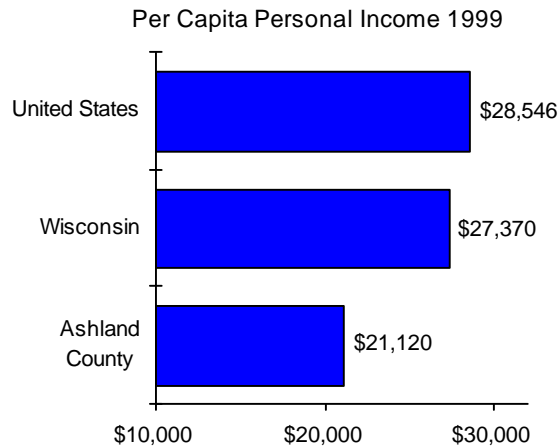
Note – The data from Employment and Wages Covered by Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance Law differs from employment data in the nonfarm wage and salary estimates because: 1) multi-location employers report all workers and wages at a single site, i.e., retail franchises; 2) not all employers are covered by the unemployment insurance law and therefore are not included in this data, i.e., railroads, parochial schools; 3) employment and wages with Indian-owned establishments are reported by industrial classification, not by government ownership. This is most apparent in services and government.

Generally, the industry with the most workers reports the highest wages. In Ashland County, that was the services industry, with 2,394 workers and a total payroll of \$55,089,789. This was higher than the \$47,463,021 payroll of manufacturers. However, because there are more workers in services, the average annual wage is less than for workers in manufacturing. Similarly, retail trade with a high proportion of the county's workers has a total payroll of \$20,156,791 and a low average annual wage. Many workers in retail trade are employed part-time, seasonally, and often work for low hourly wages. Overall, total payroll in Ashland County was \$194,306,573 and, when divided by 8,351 jobholders in 1999, produced an annual average wage of \$23,267.

Construction workers earned the highest annual average wage in Ashland County in 1999, however, workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing earned wages that exceeded wages for similar workers statewide. The greatest disparity in wages between Ashland County and the state appeared in finance, insurance and real estate. Ashland County has no large corporate offices with upper management, and higher salaries, in this industry. Overall, wages in the county were roughly 79 percent of state annual average wage of \$29,609. This is the lowest ratio since 1994.

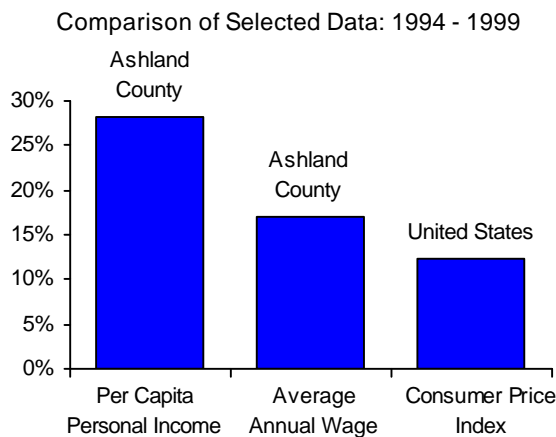


## Ashland County Wage and Income Data



The per capita personal income (PCPI) includes total income from wages and self-employment, assets (dividends, interest, rent), and transfer payments (social security, insurance, welfare) divided by total population. In 1999, the PCPI in Ashland County was 77 percent of the state's, and was lower than 45 other Wisconsin counties.

The PCPI in Ashland County, which increased 28.2 percent in the last five years, exceeded both national and state five-year increases of 26.1 and 26.4 percent, respectively. Annual increases in the PCPI also exceeded both national and state increases in three of the last five years, but not in 1999.



Growth in the county PCPI outpaced the increase in consumer prices and the growth in annual average wages. Net earnings are only 57 percent of total personal income (TPI) and include not only wages of residents (many who work more than one job), but also self-employment and proprietor's income. Net earnings increased 25 percent in the five-year period, much better than the increase in annual average wages, but less than the 29 percent increase statewide. The ratio of net earnings as a share of total personal income has declined since 1993 as the share of asset income increased. Income from assets, which are now 22 percent of TPI, increased 50 percent during the five-year period. Transfer payments rose 15 percent and account for 21 percent of total income in the county compared with 12 percent statewide.

	Per Capita Personal Income						Percent Change	
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1 year	5 year
United States	\$22,581	\$23,562	\$24,651	\$25,874	\$27,321	\$28,546	4.5%	26.4%
Wisconsin	\$21,699	\$22,573	\$23,554	\$24,791	\$26,227	\$27,370	4.4%	26.1%
Ashland County	\$16,477	\$17,408	\$18,108	\$19,159	\$20,224	\$21,120	4.4%	28.2%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

### Selected Occupational Wage Data

	Mean	Median
Accountant	\$ 17.18	\$ 15.57
Amusement/rec.attnd (casino wrk)	6.93	6.49
Assembler and fabricator	10.50	10.82
Cashier-checker	6.72	6.40
Cook, restaurant	7.93	7.43
Janitor/cleaner	8.70	8.24
Laborer, landscaping & grndskpg	8.94	8.17
Machine feeder/offbearer	8.78	8.63
Machinist	14.27	14.34
Nurse aide	8.74	8.41
Receptionist	8.38	8.21
Registered nurse	18.54	17.99
Retail salesperson	8.40	7.09
Secretary	10.42	10.39
Truck driver, heavy and OTR	14.47	13.39

Source: DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information 1999 OES wage survey for Balance-of-State (non-MSA) counties.

The wages for the selected occupations in this table were reported by employers in non-metropolitan counties in the state who responded to the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. Employers from all Wisconsin counties participated in the survey but published data was limited to MSAs and a grouping of 'balance-of-state' (BOS) counties. For comparison, the annual average wage of workers in Ashland County was 94 percent of that for workers in all BOS counties. However, that varies by industry from 110 percent in the services division to 88 percent in manufacturing.

Wages play a critical role in the economy as both workers and employers try to capitalize their worth. The labor shortage has placed additional pressure on wages and those occupations with a mean (average) and median (mid-point) wage relatively close reflect that. Mean wages include both very low and high wages, but as the labor market tightens employers offering low wages migrate closer to the mid-point.